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# Doctoral Research on Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans

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## DOCTORAL RESEARCH ON PUERTO RICO AND PUERTO RICANS

Jesse J. Dossick

None of the three major institutions of higher learning on the Island of Puerto Rico — the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras and Mayaguez, Catholic University in Ponce, and Inter-American University in San German — have established schools of advanced studies in the arts and sciences and education accredited to grant a degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education.<sup>1</sup> During the past sixty-eight years of Puerto Rico's association with the United States, however, 320 doctoral dissertations dealing with Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans have been completed and accepted in universities on the mainland. The number is respectable as a measure of interest in a geographical region of Puerto Rico's size and population. While 50 percent of this doctoral research has been carried out by Puerto Ricans, the conclusion should not be drawn, however, that this constitutes the total amount of doctoral research in which Puerto Ricans have been engaged up to the present. Many doctorates have been granted to Puerto Ricans whose research projects in the humanities and sciences have been in areas in which Puerto Rico per se does not figure.<sup>2</sup>

A thorough examination of the entire Canadian and British output of doctoral dissertations reveals only two titles on Puerto Rico — one approved in economics at Edinburgh in 1961 and the other in education at London in 1963. No attempt has been made to determine the extent of research and the number of dissertations on Puerto Rico produced in European institutions of higher learning such as the Universities of Madrid, Salamanca, and Paris; in Caribbean universities such as the University of Havana; and in the universities of Middle and South America, such as the University of Mexico. An additional list of these studies would be desirable and valuable.

Of the 57 mainland universities in which the listed doctoral research on Puerto Rico has been completed, seven universities alone account for half the output — Columbia, New York, Chicago, Cornell, Northwestern, Michigan, and Harvard. Columbia University has produced the largest number by far, with New York University in strong second place.

Advanced graduate research on Puerto Rico in American universities was negligible during the first forty years of this century, with a total of 26 dissertations being completed, 18 of which were accepted during the 1930's. The next decade produced 42 titles. The marked acceleration in output with

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<sup>1</sup>The Department of Spanish Studies in the University of Puerto Rico recently established a graduate program leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Three doctoral dissertations approved in 1966 are included in this listing.

<sup>2</sup>These will be identified in a study to be published shortly by the Journal of Caribbean Studies on doctoral dissertations completed by citizens of the Caribbean area.

more than 250 dissertations being accepted since 1950 is a reflection of growth in doctoral research everywhere. It is worth noting also that where the bulk of the early research had been carried on by mainlanders, the number of Puerto Ricans who have been successful in earning their doctorates has also increased markedly. In addition, whereas the nature of the early research had been primarily concerned with the geology and geography of the Island, today we find that while interest in these areas is still retained more interest is displayed in its education, economics, sociological-anthropological areas, and history.

The fact that the largest number of dissertations, almost a third of the total, have been written in the field of education and have been written mostly by Puerto Ricans is not surprising, since teachers comprise the major group on the Island intent upon pursuing graduate studies for purposes of advancement in their profession. An examination of the education titles reveals that most of the studies are functional and are concerned with immediate and pressing problems on all levels in the field of education.

Students of Puerto Rican affairs will note for themselves the areas in which further study should be encouraged, for example, Puerto Rican art, in which area not one dissertation has been completed.

Supplementary items referred to as "auxiliary theses" have been appended to several classifications. These dissertations are not concerned primarily with Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans, but they do contain enough relevant information of interest and value — in various chapters or sections — to warrant their inclusion.

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